



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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By Sgt. Marisa Lindsay

### **Alaska Air National Guard commander retires after 31 years of service**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska** – Brig. Gen. Timothy O’Brien retired after 31 years of National Guard service during a ceremony held at Kulis Theater here, April 20.

Unique to most National Guard journeys, O’Brien’s career has taken him throughout the United States, including California, Alabama, and Washington, D.C., as well as many deployments overseas.

However, O’Brien spent a good portion of his career as a member of the Alaska Air National Guard. He served as a pilot and commander with the 210th Rescue Squadron at Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage prior to the 176th Wing’s move to JBER. He was also commander of the 168th Air Refueling Wing at Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, and for the last two years, he has served as commander of the Alaska Air National Guard and assistant adjutant general, Air.

“I always say that regardless of where my travels with the military have led me, Alaska has always found a way to bring me back home,” O’Brien said. “That’s how I’ve come to know Alaska ... as home.”

O’Brien has had a diverse military career. He began his career as a bassoonist with the California Air National Guard’s 561st Air Force Band, and then earned his wings in 1989 as an HH-3E helicopter pilot. His military legacy includes flight time with eight aircraft, more than 3,000 flight hours, numerous combat deployments, aircraft safety and modernization, and crafting long-term relevancy within Alaska.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better career and better people to serve with,” O’Brien added. “I have been a part of an exceptional force and an exceptional team, and I’m so honored.”

Effective April 19, Col. Karen Mansfield took over as Alaska Air National Guard commander and A-TAG, Air, during a change of command ceremony.

“I cannot think of a finer officer to lead the Alaska Air National Guard,” O’Brien explained of Mansfield during the change of command ceremony.

Confident leaving Alaska Air Guardsmen to their new commander, O’Brien did impart some final advice to his troops.

“To all of our Airmen, always remember, we are American Airmen. We do not falter and we do not fail,” O’Brien concluded.

Post-retirement, O’Brien looks forward to going back to school. He and his wife, Catherine, along with their dogs, will move closer to their parents in the Pacific Northwest. They plan to relax, travel, and find ways to continue serving the military through veteran’s organizations.

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Photo cutlines

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Alaska National Guard Brig. Gen. (AK) Laurie Hummel, the adjutant general, presents the state of Alaska Legion of Merit award to Brig. Gen. Timothy O'Brien, former commander of the Alaska Air National Guard and assistant adjutant general, Air, during his retirement ceremony at Kulis Theater on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 20. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay)

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Brig. Gen. Timothy O'Brien, former commander of the Alaska Air National Guard and assistant adjutant general, Air, presents a certificate of appreciation to his wife, Catherine, during his retirement ceremony at Kulis Theater on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 20. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay)

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Brig. Gen. Timothy O'Brien, former commander of the Alaska Air National Guard and assistant adjutant general, Air, smiles with his wife, Catherine, after presenting flower to her in recognition of her support of his 31 years of military service during his retirement ceremony at Kulis Theater on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 20. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Marisa Lindsay)